

I am a customer of Sonic.net in California, a small ISP that provides DSL service across SBC's infrastructure. I realize that the regulatory item you're considering now concerns BellSouth, not SBC, but if you deregulated BellSouth it would set a precedent that might well allow SBC to squash its local competition here.

I've been with Sonic for five years now and I couldn't be happier with their service. They offer me the kind of personalized service that SBC never did. When I call tech support, I get a \*real person\* who knows what they're talking about, not an endless automated menu that finally leads me to a minimum-wage employee reading from a script, which is how SBC provides support. Sonic also provides technical options that are important to me, such as multiple static IP addresses, access to a MySQL database, additional e-mail aliases, the ability to set up and administer mailing lists, access to SpamAssassin, and much more. SBC doesn't offer these things. SBC's mass-market approach means that it caters to what "most people" would find sufficient; Sonic caters to technically sophisticated geeks like me. It's vital to consumers to have competition in the DSL market--we need differentiated services so that consumers can find the product that best meets their need, rather than being forced into the "one size fits all" service that the telecommunications giants provide.

I understand that BellSouth's argument in this case is that because they already dominate the market, eliminating all competition would not substantially change the market. \*Please\* know that this is untrue. Deregulating BellSouth would have an enormous impact not just on consumers in its area, but on ALL the customers of independent ISPs like Sonic. There are LOTS of us and we would be badly hurt if BellSouth were allowed to eliminate its competition.

I love my independent ISP. Please don't take it away from me.